



**TESTIMONY OF  
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SUPERINTENDENT AND CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BEFORE**

**A HEARING OF THE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT**

**FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2005**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, CHAIRMAN DAVIS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM. I AM CLIFFORD B. JANEY, SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT WE ARE DOING TO TURN AROUND THE DISTRICT'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE PARTNERS THAT ARE WORKING WITH US IN THE INTEREST OF EDUCATION REFORM AND STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS AS ANCHORS IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

WE KNOW WHAT CHILDREN NEED TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL. THEY NEED GOOD NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION, CONSISTENT GUIDANCE AND ACCESS TO ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES THAT WILL HELP THEM SEE AND UNDERSTAND THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF K-12 EDUCATION.

CHILDREN NEED TO BE TAUGHT SUCCESSFULLY AT EVERY LEVEL IN SCHOOL BEFORE MOVING TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL. THE FORMULA IS BASICALLY THE SAME FOR ALL CHILDREN, REGARDLESS OF RACE, CLASS AND ETHNICITY. VARIATION IN PERFORMANCE OCCURS MOST FREQUENTLY AS A RESULT OF DIFFERENCES IN PREPARATION OF THE STUDENT BEFORE ENTERING SCHOOL, OR DIFFERENCES IN PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF WHILE THE STUDENT IS IN SCHOOL.

NUMEROUS STUDIES HAVE CONFIRMED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS AND VITAL COMMUNITIES. IN HER 2003 REPORT FOR THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTIONS' GREATER WASHINGTON RESEARCH PROGRAM, ALICE RIVLIN OBSERVED THAT IMPROVING SCHOOLS WAS A KEY CONDITION FOR ATTRACTING MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES TO MAKE THEIR HOMES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA – WHICH IS, IN TURN, AN ESSENTIAL

ELEMENT IN OUR CITY'S GOAL OF INCREASING OUR POPULATION BY 100,000 RESIDENTS BY 2013.

EXCELLENT SCHOOLS BRING OTHER BENEFITS TO OUR CITY AS WELL:

- THEY ATTRACT AND KEEP EXCELLENT TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS, WHO MAKE THEIR HOMES IN THE DISTRICT.
- THEY TRAIN OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO MOVE SUCCESSFULLY INTO COLLEGE OR THE WORKPLACE – AND A WELL-TRAINED WORKFORCE, IN TURN, ATTRACTS BUSINESSES TO LOCATE IN THE CITY.
- THEY SERVE AS ANCHORS IN NEIGHBORHOODS AND RAISE LOCAL PROPERTY VALUES.

BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION OF AND THE MOMENTUM CREATED BY THE DC EDUCATION COMPACT, I RECENTLY INTRODUCED THE FIRST STEP TO MAKING THE SUBSTANTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CHANGES THAT THIS SYSTEM NEEDS -- A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CHANGE THAT I CALL THE DECLARATION OF EDUCATION.

THERE ARE THREE MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE GOALS THAT FRAME THIS DECLARATION OF EDUCATION. THE FIRST, AS IT SHOULD BE, FOCUSES ON ACADEMICS.

THE SECOND GOAL FOCUSES ON MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

THE THIRD GOAL IS COMMUNICATION – HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH AND ENGAGE OUR TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, STAFF, PARENTS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS AS PARTNERS.

THE OVERARCHING PHILOSOPHY OF THIS PLAN PLACES A HIGH VALUE ON CREATING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION, THE AIM OF WHICH IS TO CREATE A SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT COLLABORATES WITH ALL SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY IN ASSUMING RESPECTIVE ROLES AND OWNING FAIR SHARES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT SUCCESS. I AGREE WITH A RECENT WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL THAT I, ALONE, CANNOT “BRING YOUTH FROM HOME TO SCHOOL READY TO LEARN, KEEP THEM ENGAGED IN CLASS ALL DAY AND GET THEM READY FOR COLLEGE OR A CHALLENGING CAREER WHEN THEY GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL.” IN MY OWN WORDS,

EDUCATION CAN NO LONGER BE EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS AND JUST MY JOB.

BUILDING UPON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THE IMPORTANT WORK OF THE DC EDUCATION COMPACT (DCEC), I BELIEVE WE CAN STABILIZE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND SUSTAIN IT FOR YEARS TO COME BEYOND MY TENURE. THE WORK OF THE DCEC IS CRITICAL TO BUILDING THE KIND OF BROAD-BASED SUPPORT NEEDED TO REVERSE PAST SINS AND REDEEM A FUTURE NATIONAL SUCCESS STORY.

DCEC IS A SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIP CREATED SOLELY TO SUPPORT DCPS. THIS COMPACT, WHICH INCLUDES THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, MAYOR, COUNCIL MEMBERS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, UNION LEADERS, FOUNDATION COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS, IS PROVING TO BE A TREMENDOUS RESERVOIR OF RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR DCPS AS WE WORK THROUGH COMPLEX PROBLEMS AND, SIMULTANEOUSLY, REACH IMPORTANT MILESTONES THAT WILL RESTORE UNIVERSAL PUBLIC CONFIDENCE. THE COMPACT IS AN UNPRECEDENTED COALITION UNDER THE MAJOR SPONSORSHIP OF THE FANNIE MAE FOUNDATION. TO DATE, MORE THAN 1,000

STAKEHOLDERS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN AN INTENSELY FOCUSED NON-PARTISAN PROCESS.

THE CORE BELIEFS THAT GUIDE THE DCEC WORK CAN BE SUMMARIZED UNDER THREE VALUE PROPOSITIONS THAT UNDERLINE THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUATION OF STUDENT SUCCESS:

- A CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT THAT ACCEPTS THE BELIEF THAT ALL CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING A VARIETY OF SUCCESS INDICATORS, NOTWITHSTANDING THEIR STARTING POINT;
- A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE IN WHICH WE RELY UPON THE HIGHEST ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND THE BEST KNOWN BUSINESS PRACTICES; AND
- A CULTURE OF OPEN ENGAGEMENT THAT VALUES COORDINATION, COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION THROUGH COMMUNICATION.

WE INVITE ALL DC RESIDENTS WHO SHARE A COMMITMENT TO OUR MISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMPACT'S PLAN TO HELP RECLAIM PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

BASED ON THE RECOGNITION OF HOW CRITICAL COLLABORATION WILL BE TO DELIVERING HIGH ACADEMIC OUTCOMES, WE DREW UPON THE EXPERTISE OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL LEADERS WHO MADE APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE MASSACHUSETTS LEARNING STANDARDS THAT WERE UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IN MARCH 2005.

WE ARE ALSO WORKING TO IMPROVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH CITY AGENCIES TO OFFER “WRAPAROUND” HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES; WORKING WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMMING, REDUCE TRUANCY AND INCREASE STUDENT ATTENDANCE; AND JOINING WITH BUSINESSES TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WHO LEAVE HIGH SCHOOL PREPARED FOR GOOD CAREERS.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE, ALONG WITH THE YOUTH COURT AND OTHERS ASSEMBLED HERE TODAY, ARE PART OF AN INTERAGENCY TRUANCY WORK GROUP THAT WAS CONVENED LAST APRIL TO FACILITATE COLLABORATION ACROSS DISTRICT AGENCIES TO REDUCE TRUANCY. DURING YEAR ONE (SEPTEMBER



2004 - JUNE 2005), OUR EMPHASIS IS ON REDUCING TRUANCY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. THE FOCUS FOR YEAR TWO WILL BE TO ADDRESS TRUANCY ISSUES IN MIDDLE AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS. ALREADY THIS YEAR, WE HAVE SEEN A CONSISTENT DECLINE IN THE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS WITH 15 DAYS OR MORE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, AS COMPARED TO LAST YEAR.

ON A RELATED NOTE, WE ARE STRENGTHENING OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT IN THE SHORT TERM TO HELP US MANAGE SECURITY OPERATIONS IN AND AROUND OUR SCHOOLS.

OUR COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS ARE BASED UPON A TWO-TIERED APPROACH -- ACADEMIC AND OPERATIONAL REFORMS WITH ONE COMMON GOAL, TO STABILIZE OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM TO BETTER SERVE OUR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE ARE PARTNERING WITH THE CITY TO IMPROVE OUR PROCUREMENT SYSTEM AND FULLY AUTOMATE OUR PERSONNEL SYSTEM AND TO ELIMINATE THE PAYROLL BACKLOGS THAT HAVE PLAGUED THE DISTRICT FOR YEARS. SINCE JANUARY, WE HAVE PROCESSED MORE THAN 10,000 PERSONNEL ACTIONS TO CORRECT MANY OF THOSE ERRORS.

IN THE AREA OF OUR MANY FACILITIES' NEEDS, WE ARE EXPLORING INNOVATIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS CRITICAL NEEDS, GUIDED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION. ONE SUCH PARTNERSHIP IS WITH GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, A PARTNERSHIP THAT WILL HELP US REBUILD OUR ACADEMICALLY OUTSTANDING SCHOOL WITHOUT WALLS.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THIS NEW SPIRIT OF COOPERATION IS REFLECTED IN OUR NEW CO-LOCATION PLAN. UNDER THIS PLAN, WE WILL ALLOW EDUCATIONALLY COMPATIBLE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS, SUCH AS LIBRARIES, HEALTH CLINICS, COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS OR CHARTER SCHOOLS, TO SHARE IN THE USE OF OUR UNDERUTILIZED FACILITIES.

AND AN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIP CURRENTLY IN THE DEVELOPMENT STAGES THAT WILL HELP US MEET OUR FACILITIES NEEDS IS THE CREATION OF A STRATEGIC FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES OFFICE. THIS NEW OFFICE WILL SEEK TO FOSTER INNOVATIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO GENERATE NEW FUNDING ALTERNATIVES FOR OUR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN.

WE ALSO NEED A COMMITMENT OF WILL AND COLLABORATION. DCPS IS AGGRESSIVELY REVIEWING ITS

RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS. WE ARE SETTING A STANDARD OF EXPECTATIONS WITH AN EYE TOWARD EXCELLENCE AND A PERFECT FIT FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN.

BORROWING A PAGE FROM THE DC EDUCATION COMPACT, BENEFICIAL PARTNERSHIPS WOULD INCLUDE:

- A PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT AND ELECTED OFFICIALS THAT WOULD HELP US INSTITUTE A MULTI-YEAR BUDGET.
- PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, AMONG OTHERS, TO MANAGE LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS OR ADOPT ONE OF OUR PRE-K THROUGH 12 EDUCATION CLUSTERS.
- PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO ALIGN STANDARDS THAT WILL ALLOW STUDENTS TO EARN COLLEGE CREDIT AS THEY COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL, WHICH CAN SERVE AS BRIDGE PROGRAMS TO VARIOUS CAREER PATHS IN CRITICAL AREAS SUCH AS HEALTH CARE OR ENGINEERING.

- A PARTNERSHIP WITH SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW DISCIPLINE AND SAFETY PLAN AND TO EXPAND WRAPAROUND SERVICES TO INCLUDE WARDS 4 AND 8.
- A PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, FAMILIES AND CITIZENS TO STRENGTHEN THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS OF DCPS HIGH SCHOOLS THROUGH MEMBERSHIP EVENTS.

WE HAVE MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIPS THAT ARE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR DCPS AND THE DISTRICT.

I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO COME BEFORE YOU TODAY TO TALK ABOUT DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS -- WHERE WE ARE, WHERE WE NEED TO BE, AND, ULTIMATELY, HOW WE WILL PROVIDE THE KIND OF EDUCATION STUDENTS IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL DESERVE.

THIS CONCLUDES MY TESTIMONY.

I WILL NOW ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.